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UNCLAS CARACAS 001138

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NSC FOR TSHANNON AND CBARTON
USCINSO ALSO FOR POLAD
STATE PASS USAID FOR DCHA/OTI

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [VE](#)

SUBJECT: EVO, THE ICC, AND THE U.N.: VENEZUELA POLITICAL
UPDATE: 4/1/2004

REF: CARACAS 01090

Summary:

[1](#)1. (U) Leftist Bolivian legislator Evo Morales joined President Hugo Chavez in Caracas March 30 to announce plans to stage international demonstrations to commemorate the events of April 2002, when Chavez was temporarily removed from power and returned in triumph. Members of the Venezuelan human rights NGO Venezuelan Victims of Political Violence (VIVE) accused President Hugo Chavez of crimes against humanity in the International Criminal Court at the Hague March 31. Five former Venezuelan ambassadors to the United Nations sent a letter March 23 to UN SYG Kofi Annan condemning the GoV for human rights abuses and for preventing the citizens from exercising their constitutional rights to have a presidential referendum. End Summary.

Chavez Receives Evo

[1](#)2. (U) Leftist Bolivian legislator Evo Morales joined President Hugo Chavez in Caracas March 30 to announce plans to stage international demonstrations marking the events of April 2002, when Chavez was temporarily removed from power, only to return. Morales and Chavez said they would sponsor marches in various cities on "the continent" to commemorate what they called a failed coup d'etat, and to support Chavez's "Bolivarian revolution." Other Latin American leftist organizations such as Barrios de Pie (Argentina), Movimiento Pachakutec (Bolivia); Farabundo Marti Liberation Front (El Salvador); Sandinista Front (Nicaragua); the Cuban Communist Party (Cuba); and the Amplio Front (Uruguay) are also in Caracas for the annual Bolivarian People's Congress.

[1](#)3. (U) Chavez said coordinated April events will condemn U.S. intervention, and recalled that he was swept back into power in April 2002 by a counteroffensive that he said took "the hawks of the CIA and pentagon" by surprise. Chavez said the U.S. did not count on the people rising up to throw off the tyranny and the military refusing their "bastard orders."

[1](#)4. (U) Morales arrived in Caracas March 29 for several days of meetings, including discussion on foreign aid for Bolivia rumored to involve asphalt for Bolivian roads and \$50 million. He said the results of those discussions would be announced soon in La Paz. Morales also thanked Chavez for his support in Bolivian efforts to reclaim a passage to the sea through Chilean territory. Morales told reports he will travel to Spain the week of April 5 to meet with newly-elected Prime Minister Zapatero.

Victims Accuse Chavez in the International Criminal Court

[1](#)5. (U) Members of the Venezuelan human rights NGO Venezuelan Victims of Political Violence (VIVE) filed formal accusations under the Rome Statute against President Hugo Chavez in the International Criminal Court (ICC) March 31. VIVE's accusation lists instances of murder, torture, unlawful detention, and sexual abuse it alleges Chavez security forces and agents carried out since July 2002. The accusation terms the collected human rights abuses as "crimes against humanity" perpetrated in a systematic manner as part of GoV policy. VIVE charges that an appeal to the international body is required because the Attorney General's Office, the Ombudsman, and the courts in Venezuela have neglected to conduct lawful investigations and to take action to protect the citizenry from GoV abuse. VIVE also requested a preliminary declaration from the ICC because the GoV has started a criminal investigation against them for having brought an earlier ICC complaint.

Ex-Ambassadors Appeal to UN SYG

16. (U) Five former Venezuelan ambassadors to the United Nations, Simon Alberto Consalvi, Ramon Escovar Salom, Diego Arria, Adolpho Raul Taylhardat, and Milos Alcalay, sent a letter March 23 to UN SYG Kofi Annan condemning the GoV for human rights abuses and for preventing the citizens from exercising their constitutional rights to have a presidential referendum. The ambassadors complained of GoV efforts to avoid or confuse orders issued by the Supreme Court (TSJ) Electoral Chamber regarding the referendum, and detailed GoV attempts to remove or disqualify TSJ justices through actions in the National Assembly and investigations by the offices of the Attorney General and the Ombudsman. The result of these GoV efforts, said the ambassadors, was to impede the people's rights to an electoral solution to the current political impasse. The ambassadors invited SYG Annon to visit Venezuela and hoped that he would use his "voice of authority" to call for a referendum and an end to GoV abuse.

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2004CARACA01138 - UNCLASSIFIED